

THE RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

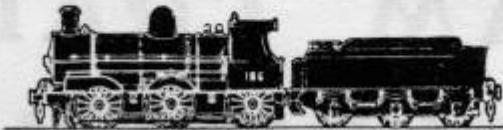
STEAM TRAIN EXCURSION

Claddagh Railtour 1978

MULLINGAR - GALWAY



RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND



WELCOME ABOARD THE CLADDAGH RAILTOUR A STEAM HAULED EXCURSION FROM MULLINGAR TO GALWAY OVER THE 76½ MILE LINE OF THE OLD MIDLAND GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY OF IRELAND.

Today's tour takes its name from the famous district to the right of Galway Harbour renowned for its Claddagh rings and once inhabited by fishermen who claimed exclusive rights over Galway Bay.

Our journey starts from Mullingar Station which was the terminus of the line from Dublin from 1848 to 1851. It became a junction in 1855 when the line to Longford on the Sligo line was opened.

On our journey we pass through Castletown, Streamstown and Moate before coming to Athlone the only stop on today's trip. We enter Athlone over the 542ft. long Shannon Bridge completed in 1851. Athlone has two junctions. The old Great Southern and Western Line joins at the Mullingar end of the station before crossing the bridge while the line to Westport branches off to the right on the Galway side. This line started its life as the Great Northern and Western Railway being opened to Roscommon in 1860. Recommencing our journey we pass through Monksland, Carrowduff, Ballinasloe, Woodlawn and Attymon Junction where the 9 miles Loughrea line branched off. At Athenry (opened 1851) we are joined by the lines from Limerick and Claremorris. The Line into Galway was opened in 1851 with the completion of the section from Mullingar. To the right of the station as we enter can be seen the remaining spur of the Clifden Branch opened in 1895 and closed in 1935. This 49 miles branch crossed the river Corrib on a bridge the pillars of which can still be seen.

TIMETABLE	Mullingar Depart	10:15	Galway Depart	17:20
	Athlone Depart	11:20	Athlone Arrive	19:00
	Galway Arrive	13:15	Mullingar Arrive	20:15

OUR LOCOMOTIVE

Locomotive No. 186 was one of over 100 similar engines built for the Great Southern and Western Railway to the design of Alexander McDonnell of Inchicore Works. These engines, of which only one other No.184 now remains, were known as the J15s or the 101 class locomotives. No.186 itself was built by the firm of Sharp Stewart of Manchester in November 1879. When steam traction ceased on CIÉ it was presented to the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland in 1965 and since then it has worked on many steam hauled excursions. On today's trip it hauls a train of CIÉ coaches including a snack car serving the usual refreshment and is driven by CIÉ Drivers. During the 4 hours in Galway the fire will be cleaned and the engine turned on the turntable and prepared for the return journey. On the trip the engine will use about four tons of coal and 10,000 gallons of water. While it is housed in Mullingar it is serviced and maintained by the voluntary efforts of engineers and skilled craftsmen who have devoted much of their spare time to ensure that the engine is in perfect working order for today's journey.

THE SOCIETY

The Railway Preservation Society of Ireland was formed in 1964 and has in its possession a number of mainline steam locomotives in working order. Its headquarters is at Whitehead, Co. Antrim and it uses its engines to haul a number of enthusiasts' specials to all parts of the country each year. Today's excursion was organised by the Dublin Area of the Society.

Details of the Society are available from the Dublin Agent - Mr. Sam Carse, Dublin.

For today's journey our engine No.186 is in the green livery of the old English South Eastern Railway and re-numbered 136 as required by Starling Productions Inc. for the on-location shooting of "The First Great Train Robbery", starring Sean Connery and Donald Sutherland, at present being filmed in this country. Our loco 184 has also been returned to working order for this film.

WE HOPE YOU WILL HAVE A PLEASANT DAY AND ENJOY THE TRIP.



Above: With the advent of diesel locos the old steam engines were redundant and cut up for scrap. Here in February 1963 a line of them await their fate at Mullingar. (J.P. O'Dea)

Below: Ex GNR loco 179 stands at the turntable at Mullingar, July 1960. A steam crane with bucket on the right was used for coaling the engines. (J.P. O'Dea)

Front Cover: Loco 186 leaves Galway and crosses the Corrib Bridge with last year's Claddagh excursion. (C.P. Friel)





Above: Winter railway scene outside Mullingar Engine Shed in 1962. (George Bury)

Below: Loco No.588 leaves Mullingar Shed in January 1962 for the Cavan Branch via Inny Junction (J.P. O'Dea).

